

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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S-E-C-R-E-T

COUNTRY USSR

REPORT

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Pravda Press Bureau and the Tass Press Bureau

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"PRAVDA" PRESS BUREAU AND "TASS" PRESS BUREAU

These are the official titles of the well-known special Soviet organizations which supply materials of the most diversified nature to the Soviet Union's press and radio.

There are no other higher or lower supplying organizations in the Soviet state in this field. Pravda Press Bureau and Tass Press Bureau are both located in Moscow.

Pravda Press Bureau has an apparatus of workers (editors, literary workers, etc.) consisting basically of Pravda-ites, that is, workers from Pravda's editorial office and publishing house. The Pravda editorial office is the immediate owner, directing the operations of the Pravda Press Bureau. The Tass Press Bureau has an identical set-up, that is, it is subordinated to the direction of the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union, and its apparatus of workers is staffed from the permanent employees of this agency.

Both organizations have the responsibility of regularly providing bulletins with materials intended for publication and radio broadcasts to the entire provincial press (factory newspapers in enterprises, construction sites, in sovkhoses, Higher Educational Institutions, etc; rayon, okrug, city, oblast, kray and republic newspapers; newspapers of railroads, river and maritime steamship companies, etc.) as well as to local committees for radio-information.

The difference in the contents of articles from Pravda Press Bureau and from Tass Press Bureau is generally small. In contrast to Pravda Press Bureau, Tass Press Bureau deals with basic dissemination of the so-called "International Scene" and independent materials on international themes. Besides, much space in the bulletins of Tass, which has a wide network of its correspondents within the country, is devoted to articles interpreting

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the issues of Soviet work (the activity of the Soviets) and the so-called progressive experience in production and agriculture. In many respects the bulletins of both newspapers often parallel each other. In other words, it is a fact that both the Pravda and Tass Press Bureaus release articles on identical themes, only that the authors of these similar articles are usually different people.

Outwardly, each separately-received bulletin, which as a rule contains material only on a definite theme, appears thus: the text (printed on both sides of a paper having a standard format) occupying a definite number of pages. At the top of the first page, above the double rule separating the text with its headline from the general information, are notations [REDACTED]

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1. The words "Pravda Press Bureau";

2. Below these words -- "Bulletin for Oblast Newspapers." This terminology varies, depending on the area of the newspapers for which the cited bulletin is intended -- for instance, it may be indicated as "Bulletin for Rayon Newspapers";

3. Newspaper zones for which the bulletin is intended are further designated thus: "For newspapers of zones 1, 2, 5," which instructions mean: the given material is to be published only in those newspapers which are issued in the industrial-economic zones designated on the bulletin, this in accordance with the decision adopted in the Press-Bureau division of the country. [REDACTED] the division provides for 10 zones for rayon newspapers and 5-6 zones for city newspapers. Often the bulletins are also marked thus: "For all zones." In those instances this bulletin is printed by all newspapers, ~~regardless~~ regardless of the zone in which they are issued.

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4. Also indicated is the number of the bulletin and the date when the material was written.

Printed on the bottom of the last page are: The censor's mark; the number of ^{the} printing order; the words "Pravda Publishing Firm imeni I. V. Stalin" and, finally, the address of the Publishing Firm, -- Moscow 40, Leningradskoe Shosse No 24.

[REDACTED] the bulletins of the Tass Press Bureau have exactly the same external format.

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The authors of the materials appear as actual staff-members of the Pravda and Tass Press Bureaus, as do the journalists, writers and other specialists enlisted by them, plus individuals selected in the capacity of authors by the Communist Party apparatus (for instance, for a report on their work or on the work of others in industry, agriculture etc). There are only a few full time authors, those who specialize on definite issues, as for instance BOCHAROV, MARININ, KHAR'KOV and a few others who write on international themes.

The Pravda and Tass Press Bureaus do not have any departments or sections outside Moscow. They themselves are not considered independent organizations, insofar as they are subordinated to and under the control of the editorial offices of the newspaper Pravda and the direction of Tass, which in essence comprise the nondepartmentalized parts of these two organizations. By dint of this obligation, they (the press bureaus) are not directly subordinated either to the Administration of Propaganda and Agitation of the CC-CPSU or to any other central party or government organ. As with subordination and accountability, so with the receiving of instructions and the designation of relevant operations or relevant changes in the party line -- they are conducted through Pravda's editorial offices or Tass' management.

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[redacted] For instance, if the bulletins treat with the theme "For Introducing Outstanding Experience in Beet Cultivation," "More Cotton for the Country," "The Michurin Method of Biology in Horticulture," etc. -- these are designated for newspapers published in those zones where sugar beet, cotton, and horticulture predominate in agriculture. If the bulletins treat of such themes as "The Communist Party -- The Leading Force in Soviet Society,"; "The Soviet Union -- the Bulwark of Peace, Democracy and Progress," or "Science and Religion" -- then these bulletins are earmarked "For all zones." The difference in the content of materials which are disseminated by newspaper groupings rather than by zones ~~but~~ is immense. For instance, "International Scene" received in the editorial office of the rayon newspaper would be distinguished from "International Scene" addressed to the oblast newspaper not only by its comparatively small size but also by the terminology of its discussion and by the facts presented.

"International Scene" as designated for rayon newspapers would be considerably duller and further from the truth, for it would be directed to a rural audience which is more "isolated" and less knowledgeable on the essence of "facts." Often there is a difference in the contents of Pravda and Tass Press-Bureaus articles for newspapers of identical groups, especially in materials of a political nature. Thus, newspapers like Sovetskaya Kirgiziya receive more exaggerated articles, for instance, than the Georgian Zarya Vostoka, although both are newspapers of Soviet republics. Doubtless the supposition is that it is far easier to deceive a Kirgiz than a Georgian.

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Subscriptions to the Pravda and Tass Press Bureau bulletins are generally conducted in October-November (for the forthcoming year). Part of the newspapers concurrently order bulletins both from Pravda and from Tass. However, it is interesting to note that the editorial offices of the newspapers use Pravda materials more often, considering them more temperate than those of Tass. The yearly subscription for rayon newspapers to the Pravda Press Bureau bulletins costs exactly 300 rubles for an average of three articles every 10 days, while for oblast newspapers the cost is about 600 rubles (they receive an average of 5 articles every 10 days). Subscription rates for Tass Press Bureau bulletins are approximately the same.

[redacted] the acquisition of Soviet press and radio materials pertains only to the Pravda and Tass Press Bureaus. The Administration of Propaganda and Agitation of the CC-CPSU does not as a rule deal with this. [redacted] both Pravda and Tass disseminate their bulletins in plain envelope packages on which is printed, in lieu of postal stamps, as though on a typewriter, "postage paid." The addresses are typed, but the rest of the text on the envelope or package is printed thus: (on the upper half), "No unlawful enclosures," and (on the bottom half), "If addressee cannot be located, please return this package immediately." Also indicated on the upper part is "This package contains urgent material. Request that it reach addressee without delay."

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Some bulletins come to the editorial office with instructions: "For the newspaper issue of..." (day, month, and year are given). Such

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bulletins usually contain articles discussing some kind of anniversary data.^{25X1}
 There are also bulletins with notations: "To be published after..." (day, month, year). Sometimes on the third or fourth day after receiving one of these bulletins, the editorial office receives a package with the warning: "Do not publish the article (titled) which was sent to you"; or "Refrain from publishing the article (titled) which was sent to you (date)"; or "In the article (titled) which was sent to you (date) in column from the left (or right), paragraph --, print to read as follows ---- " (the new wording^{25X1} is given). There are all kinds of other notations which it is difficult

[redacted] to illustrate [redacted] 25X1

All newspapers are required to send one copy of each issue to the Pravda and Tass Press Bureaus in Moscow. This is done in order that these organizations might control the frequency and correctness of the use of their materials by the provincial press. There have been instances of one or the other of the Press-Bureaus threatening enterprises for willfully abridging ~~edit~~, materials, or distorting texts.

The foremost task in supplying newspapers with prepared articles out of Moscow is to reduce the possibility of the local press publishing its own materials on a large scale, as well as to avoid the possibility of political errors and divergence from the party line [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] authors and commentators [redacted] have repeatedly 25X1
 witnessed cases when editors, receiving materials from local authors, would say to them, "Unfortunately I cannot use your article because I already have material on this theme forwarded by Moscow. Do you see this approved and prepared material... Had you written it earlier, well..." Doubtless the editor has the right to print the article of the provincial author in place of the Moscow article, since there is no order forbidding him to do so. However, in practice no editor dares to deny a preference for articles

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from the press-bureaus, both for political reasons and because he does not have to pay for the Moscow material, while the local author must be paid his author's fee.

Supplying the provincial press with foreign information comes through Tass by way of broadcast texts by special broadcasting stations of the Ministry of Communications USSR. In order to have the right to keep records and publish foreign information, a signed statement must first be made for this broadcast. Otherwise, if the signed statement is not made and the Tass material obtained by radio appears in the newspaper, then when the Telegraph Agency detects this "lifted" article in the newspaper, it [the Agency] has the right to exact a large penalty from the newspaper, either "by agreement" or via the courts. Radio broadcast material by special radio stations (simultaneously on some wave-lengths) is issued from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m., and sometimes even up to 6 a.m. This time is allocated by newspaper groups: rayon and city newspapers publishing once or twice per week; rayon and city newspapers publishing three and more times per week; oblast, kray newspapers, etc. In small newspapers where there are no typists, the broadcast is taken down by hand, but in all the larger newspapers the broadcasts are received by special typists with comparatively high skill in such receptions. Information reception from Moscow is conducted in this setting: three powerful radio receivers are located in a special sound-proof room.

The dials on all of them are set, but only one is turned on; the other two are in reserve. One typist takes down the broadcast on her typewriter, while the other, using earphones, takes down the material in shorthand, quite independently of the first typist. As a rule an editorial worker is present in the room during the radio broadcast. He is responsible for the preparation of foreign material for the press. Such an assistant in

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the editorial offices of Sotsialisticheskaya Osetiya was David Zinov'yevich VISHNEVKIN, a Jew, married to an Ossetian woman. He lacked higher education but he was well versed in foreign politics. The broadcasted foreign information appears in the press within a day, that is 2-3 days earlier than the Moscow newspapers containing the same information.


It quite frequently happened that the typist inaccurately notes some of the words from the broadcast. She confuses terms, surnames, or titles (usually when only one typist is taking down the broadcast). This makes it impossible to print the material in the newspaper. In such cases, the editorial worker who is managing the information operation contacts Nal'chik, Groznyy, Makhachkala, Baku, or Tbilisi by phone, and thus finds out from the neighboring editorial offices the exact contents of the distorted part of the broadcast. In an Sotsialisticheskaya Osetiya -- and this newspaper evidently is not an exception -- foreign information received by radio is simultaneously printed in quadruplicate. One of these copies (the first) is sent to the typesetter, that is, to the printing plant, the second is sent to the First Secretary of the Oblast Party Committee, the third is given to the editor, and the fourth remains in the files (akt) of the manager of the information.

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The most important party -- government documents, decisions, etc., as well as separate Pravda lead articles, are also received by the editors in exactly the same manner.

Attention should also be focused on still another aspect of supplying newspapers, from the Tass point of view. This is the dissemination to newspapers of the photo materials (not technical but snapshots). "Fotokhronika Tass," one of the Tass departments, deals with the dissemination of photographs. "Fotokhronika Tass" disseminates the prepared photos to

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small newspapers which do not have their own zinc-engraving, or more accurately, cuts from zinc plates or from plastic. Newspapers which have their own zinc engraving equipment receive only the photographs from which cuts are made. The photos from "Fotokhronika Tass" are most diverse in nature and content and embrace the internal life of the country as well as the foreign world. The newspaper editorial offices use their own discretion in making use of photographs received from Tass. Every editorial office has its own photo files, in which are filed not only those photographs sent by Tass, but also many others, such as portraits and snapshots (various sizes and cuts) of USSR party and government leaders, etc. The editorial office gets this kind of photograph from Moscow twice a year. On a note pasted to each photograph is usually written: "For completion of the editor's photo files," followed by the full name of the person photographed or an identification of the photo. There are strict Tass instructions to the effect that in publishing the photo of any party or government leaders, no photo can be superimposed on another. If we say that there will be a photo of Bulganin on page one of the newspaper, then there should be no photo on the same spot on ~~the same page~~ ^{25X1} ~~(reverse)~~ page.

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